

Sworn Affidavit Of**Rev. Gordon J. MacRae****Post Office Box 14 Concord, N.H. 03302 / GJMacrae@aol.com**

The following affidavit was written by Father Gordon J. Mac Rae, a prisoner in the New Hampshire State Prison and sworn and witnessed on April 22, 1998. The contents of this affidavit are legally privileged, and are written for the use of specific individuals. Any unauthorized use, photocopy and dissemination of this document is barred by federal law and the laws of the State of New Hampshire, which govern attorney client privilege. Any use of this document without the expressed permission of it's author or his attorneys is strictly forbidden.

The sworn, signed and notarized original of this affidavit is located at the Law Office of Eileen A. Nevins, Esq., unit 3-2, One Park Avenue, Hampton, New Hampshire 03842-1011 (603)926-1366.

AFFIDAVIT OF REV. GORDON J. MACRAE

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THE STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE)

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MERRIMACK, S.S.)

I, Father Gordon J. MacRae, state that the following account is my own, is the truth, and is recalled and written to the best of my ability.

1. I was born on the 9th of April 1953 in Beverly, Massachusetts. I attended Lynn Public Schools through high school graduating in May of 1970. From 1970 until 1973 I was employed as a machinist at Glenmere Hub Die Co., Inc. in Lynn, MA. while participating in evening courses at North Shore Community College in Beverly, Massachusetts. In 1973, at the age of twenty, I was accepted as a postulant of the Order of Friars Minor, Capuchin, and in August of 1974 I entered the novitiate of the Capuchin Order in Milton, Massachusetts. Upon completion of the novitiate year in August of 1975, I professed simple vows as a Capuchin and commenced formation and academic studies for the Roman Catholic priesthood.

2. While residing with my Capuchin community at St. Anthony Friary in Hudson, New Hampshire from 1975 to 1978, I attended St. Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire with major courses of studies in Classics, Philosophy and Psychology. I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology, with honors, in May of 1978. At that time I decided to leave the Capuchins and, upon strong and positive recommendations from my superiors and the formation staff of the Capuchins, I was accepted as a candidate for the diocesan priesthood by the Diocese of Manchester, New Hampshire.

3. From September, 1978 through December, 1981, I studied theology at St. Mary Seminary and University in Baltimore, Maryland where I was ordained to the diaconate on the 21st of November, 1981. In December of 1981 I was awarded the Bachelor of Sacred Theology and Master of Divinity Degrees, with honors, from St. Mary Seminary and University in Baltimore. From January to June of 1982 I was a deacon intern at

two parishes in Groveton and North Stratford in the far north of New Hampshire. On the 5th of June, 1982 I was ordained to the priesthood at St. John the Evangelist Church in Hudson, New Hampshire by The Most Reverend Odore Gendron, Bishop of Manchester. My first Sacrifice of the Mass was celebrated in the same church on the 6th of June, 1982. I was the only candidate for ordination in the Diocese of Manchester that year.

4. Three years prior to my priesthood ordination, in 1979, a tragedy which took place in the Diocese became a national news story. I was beginning my second year of theological studies in Baltimore at the time, and learned from a radio news broadcast that a priest in New Hampshire, Father Joseph Sands, was being held hostage by an armed man and woman in the rectory of St. Rose of Lima parish in Littleton, in the north of New Hampshire. Father Sands was a friend whom I had met during my years as a Capuchin when I spent the Summers of 1976 and 1977 in parochial ministry in the town of Groveton, New Hampshire. Father Sands was a Cistercian who was on leave from that Order, and he resided in the Town of Lancaster, New Hampshire, where he directed a residential home for troubled adolescents known as Alpha House. Father Sands and I became friends when he filled in for the vacationing pastor, Father Robert Simard (now deceased) for one of the Summers during which I ministered at the Groveton parish while a Capuchin. I therefore carefully followed the news accounts of Father Sands being held hostage at gun point. At the end of the day I learned that Father Sands was shot and killed in the rectory, and that the gunman then killed his woman companion, and, finally, himself.

5. In the weeks following this tragedy I traveled to Groveton, N.H., during a break from seminary studies to talk about the incident with the pastor, Father Simard, who was also a friend of Father Sands. Father Simard related to me that Father Sands had been replacing the pastor of St. Rose of Lima parish in Littleton, about fifteen miles south of Father Sands's home in the Town of Lancaster. I learned that on the morning of the tragedy a man and woman rang the doorbell of the Littleton rectory. When the parish secretary answered they asked to see the parish priest to discuss a baptism. When the secretary let them in and explained that the pastor, Father Stephen Scruton, was vacationing in Ireland, the man produced a gun and ordered the secretary to call another priest. The secretary's young son was in the rectory with her at the time. At gunpoint, she called Father Sands telling him that there was an emergency requiring

his immediate presence. Father Sands then drove the fifteen miles to the Littleton rectory and walked in on the armed gunman and woman. Shortly thereafter, Father Sands managed to throw the young boy out a first floor window from which the secretary also escaped. Father Sands was then tied up and beaten. The secretary went for the police who then surrounded the rectory and began a day long telephone negotiation with the gunman.

6. Ironically, that very morning the Pastor of the parish and intended target of the gunman, Father Stephen Scruton, left for a vacation in Ireland with his mother. Father Simard related to me that a year earlier the gunman had some sort of negative encounter with Father Scruton at the parish rectory, and was seeking revenge. The gunman was a transient who had recently been released from the state mental hospital following a brief commitment there. During the day long negotiations between the gunman and a State Police hostage unit, the Governor of the State, Hugh Gallen, flew by helicopter to Littleton to attempt to aid in the negotiation. Governor Gallen was a native of Littleton, a parishioner of that parish, and a friend of the pastor, Father Stephen Scruton. During the day long negotiation, which was tape recorded by the State Police, the gunman demanded Father Scruton's return. When this did not occur the gunman shot and killed Father Sands, his female companion, and himself. Father Scruton was returned immediately, and he remained in the parish for another year. The tape recordings of the negotiations had been sealed by Governor Gallen and never became public. Governor Gallen died of cancer while in office a year later, and Father Scruton was transferred as pastor to St. John the Evangelist parish in Hudson, N.H. on the state's southern border. It was there, shortly before my ordination, that I met Father Scruton for the first time.

7. The former pastor of St. John's in Hudson, Father Gerard Boucher, had been transferred to Miraculous Medal parish in Hampton when Father Scruton came to Hudson. Because the Capuchin Friary where I once studied was in the Hudson parish, I knew Father Boucher quite well from my years as a Capuchin. It was Father Boucher who sponsored my admission to the Diocese, and it was through my friendship with Father Boucher that I planned for my ordination ceremony to be held in the Hudson parish. Though I had never lived or been assigned there, I considered it to be my home parish since my family and parish of origin were in Massachusetts.

8. Early in 1982, about six months after Father Boucher transferred to Miraculous Medal Parish in Hampton, he and that parish were also thrust into a controversy which became a national news story. The Hampton parish had a small parochial school staffed by four Sisters of Mercy and three lay teachers. The four sisters, Honora Reardon, Mary Rita Furlong, and Justine and Kathryn Colliton (who were also blood sisters) had been there for eight years by then, but had a long standing dispute with the parish's pastoral staff. Father Boucher had the task of attempting to resolve this dispute, but experienced little success. In March of 1982 the Superintendent of Diocesan Schools, Brother Roger Lamoyne, FSC, visited the sisters and, without father Boucher's knowledge, presented them with an unsigned memo from Bishop Gendron which stated that their teaching contracts at the parochial school would not be renewed for the next school year. The memo was released to the statewide news media and publicized the next day. In the days which followed, the sisters, Father Boucher, the parish and the Diocese were thrust into the spotlight of local and national news attention as the four sisters obtained legal counsel and filed a precedent setting lawsuit against Bishop Gendron, the Diocese, the parish and Father Boucher. The parish divided evenly into supporters of the sisters, who created an activist organization known as SOS or Save Our Sisters, and a larger but less vocal group of parishioners who supported the pastor and the decision of the Diocese. The SOS group tended to also draw activists from outside the parish as the matter became transformed in the media from a parish dispute into a feminist cause in protest of what was portrayed as an oppressive, male dominated Church. The sisters barricaded themselves into the parish convent next to the rectory and refused to move. There were daily protests in front of the church organized by the SOS, and Sunday liturgies drew crowds of supporters of the sisters who conducted demonstrations both inside and outside the church. These protests became media events gradually resulting in ongoing television and press coverage of the dispute.

9. At the time I was ordained on June 5, 1982 I recall that there was some substantial concern that members of the SOS would use that event to demonstrate at the ordination Mass since the bishop and many priests of the Diocese were there, and the Hudson church in which the ordination took place was Father Boucher's former parish. There was, to everyone's relief, no demonstration. However, there was a very surprising announcement. Two days before my ordination I talked with Father Boucher,

who also served on the Diocesan Personnel Board which was responsible for recommending assignments to the bishop. Father Boucher told me that the Personnel Board had met to discuss my first assignment as a priest, and jokingly said that since I was the only ordination that year it was the shortest Personnel Board meeting he had ever attended. In our discussion he teased me saying that he is not permitted to divulge the assignment, but finally told me that the Board had assigned me to St. Catherine Parish in Manchester, one of the largest parishes in the diocese. Father Boucher told me to act surprised when the Bishop gave me the assignment.

10. A few days later, in the sacristy before the ordination Liturgy, Bishop Gendron handed me an envelop containing a letter instructing me that my first assignment as a priest is to Miraculous Medal parish in Hampton, assisting Father Boucher. The letter also indicated that I would be replacing the current two parochial vicars, Fathers Roger Fournier and George Robichaud, who were both reassigned. The bishop's letter said nothing about the public controversy and divisions in the parish which had become an expected part of the daily television news and front page press. At the end of the ordination Mass Bishop Gendron announced the assignment. I will always remember the collective gasp among the approximately 500 members of my family, friends and priests of the Diocese who were present. In the days which followed there was much controversy about the appropriateness of this situation as a first assignment for a priest, but in time the controversy diminished. In the middle of June, 1982 I began what was to be a painfully difficult ministry at Miraculous Medal Parish in Hampton.

11. It was my intention that the parish, and its programs, should continue to function despite the ongoing controversy and the attention it drew. At first, I was seen as somewhat of a neutral party in the parish dispute, but rumors about my presence there were rampant. Members of the SOS group went to extremes to disrupt the day to day life and administration of the parish, and even hired the services of a private investigator to investigate Father Boucher and I. It was an impossible situation in which to minister because of the depth of feeling of the Sisters' supporters. They attended every parish meeting, and every agenda was dominated by their accusations of a conspiracy by the bishop, the pastor and others to destroy the parish school, and accusations of gross injustice toward the Sisters. Parish Council and School Board meetings, which were ordinarily attended only by the dozen or so members, now had to